ARCHIVES & RECORDS ASSOCIATION REGISTRATION SCHEME

REGULATIONS & GUIDANCE NOTES

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The Guidance Notes are presented in nine parts as follows. The parts have been designed to be helpful to people at particular stages of the Registration Scheme, or can be read one after the other for a complete overview. All parts are available to download from the Archives & Records Association website.

- Part 1 - Information for people thinking of enrolling on the Scheme
- Part 2 - Information for candidates on the Scheme [with worked examples of forms]
- **Part 3 – Information for candidates submitting their portfolio**
- Part 4 – Information for mentors
- Part 5 – Information for employers
- Part 6 – Blank forms
- Part 7 – Help & Contact Details
- Part 8 – List of Assessors
- Part 9 – Summary of rules applying to the Scheme
- Change log

Part 3 - Information for candidates submitting their portfolio

3.1 Portfolio contents checklist

Blank forms can be found in Guidance Notes Part 6 – Blank Forms. Examples of completed forms can be downloaded separately from the Guidance Notes web pages.

When submitted for assessment the portfolio should contain: -

The completed application form (which must be signed by the candidate and their employer).

The assessment fee – since the start of 2001, there has been an assessment fee of £50 payable when a registration scheme portfolio is submitted for assessment. This fee also covers one repeat assessment in the case of portfolios referred back to candidates for further work and resubmission. Cheques should be payable to the 'Archives & Records Association' and a receipt for the fee can be provided if requested. Alternatively an invoice can be sent if requested; candidates should supply the name and address to be invoiced. Candidates may pay by credit card through the Association's office, and should notify the Registrar if this is the case.

Candidates who paid the enrolment fee (which was payable by candidates enrolling on the Scheme from 1996 until mid 2000, now discontinued) may deduct £15 from the assessment fee, i.e. pay £35. Candidates should ensure they are sending the correct amount of money. If a candidate is unsure, the Registrar can advise if a candidate paid an enrolment fee or not.

Information on the candidate's work history such as a CV and/or job description/s of present and any previous posts during the registration scheme period. (This information is not for assessment but to provide the assessors with the context in which the candidate has undertaken the Scheme).

The reference(s) from the candidate's mentor (or mentors). This must be signed, and preferably supplied on headed notepaper. If a mentor is supplying a reference in a personal capacity and therefore does not wish to use their employer's notepaper, they can obtain Archives & Records Association headed paper from the Society's office.

Completed Learning Outcomes forms for each activity for which credits are being claimed.

Evidence to support each activity. The evidence should have the candidate's name on it or, if it does not, the candidate should ask their mentor or line-manager to sign a short statement, supplied separately or written on the evidence or on the relevant Learning Outcomes form, to the effect that the activity was the work of the candidate.

No more than 3 A4 pages (sides) of evidence may be submitted per credit.

<u>An additional item is required from those who enrolled on the Scheme with a professional qualification obtained overseas</u>: a short "**Adaptation Report**" describing any differences they have perceived between professional archives and records management practices in Britain and Ireland as compared to the country in which they obtained their qualification and/or used to work and how they have adapted to these differences and become proficient in their new work environment. The nature of the sector in which they are working will be taken into account when assessing this report.

3.2 Application dates

The registration scheme portfolio should be sent to the Registrar for assessment. The deadlines for submission are 1 April and 1 October each year. The Registrar's address can be found in part 7 of the Guidance Notes, on the Association's website or obtained from the Association's office.

The Registrar will acknowledge receipt of the portfolio by e-mail; candidates should supply an e-mail address on the application form if at all possible. Candidates will be notified of the result of their assessment within three months.

3.3 Portfolio submission

Please submit your registration application in a binder which holds all the material securely. It should not be bigger than a standard ring binder; lever arch files are too bulky and indicate that too much evidence is being submitted. Soft covers are preferred as this makes it easier to post.

Remember to check that all the necessary contents of the portfolio have been included. *Do retain a complete photocopy of your portfolio in case of loss in the post. Send photocopies and not originals of any valuable or unique documents e.g. qualification certificates, photographs, etc.*

All the documentation for each activity – Learning Outcome Forms and evidence - should be clearly marked with the relevant number as listed on the application form, ideally '1.1', '1.2', etc.

Candidates are encouraged to use dividers between development areas and/or individual credits as this makes it easier to assess the portfolio. If plastic pockets are used, it is suggested that sheets are placed in them back-to-back (i.e. a maximum of two sheets per wallet) to avoid excessive handling of material in the portfolio during the assessment process and to reduce damage to the structure of the portfolio in the post.

Portfolios may be submitted on disk provided their contents are clearly organised in the same way as they would be in a sub-divided binder. The documents requiring signatures (application form and mentor's reference) should additionally be sent to the Registrar in hard copy.

Candidates should not include covering letters with their portfolios containing information necessary to the understanding of the portfolio. Such information (for example on changes of name, career breaks, etc) should go on the application form where there is a space for any other relevant information.

Candidates should proofread and check their portfolio very carefully. The assessors expect high standards from those who have been working in professional posts for several years, and a portfolio which is poorly presented will not be viewed sympathetically.

3.4 Assessment procedure

The Registrar checks each portfolio to ensure that it is: -

<u>Sufficient</u> All the required documentation is included and correctly completed: signed application form, detailed reference(s) from mentor(s), CV/job description, verified evidence, adaptation report (if applicable)
<u>Valid</u> The credits sought add up to a total of twelve, cover at least three of the four development areas with a maximum of four credits in the formal training course

development area, and a maximum of seven credits in any of the other three development areas (private study/professional research, work achievements and contribution to the profession.
Current The candidate has completed the minimum three years full time (or equivalent) professional work experience since qualification and that all activities occurred since qualification and none occurred more than ten years ago.
Authentic All activities are the achievement of the candidate and for any team activities the candidate's contribution is clearly described and supported by their mentor.
Relevant All activities are relevant to professional archives, records management and conservation work and that the activities submitted within a particular development area are relevant to that area.

If there are any problems the Registrar will contact the candidate immediately by e-mail, and wherever possible seek to resolve the problem in time to allow the portfolio to be submitted to the assessors.

The team of assessors are experienced registered members of the Association drawn from all three professions, archives, records management and conservation, and from a variety of work environments. All assessors are initially trained in the assessment process and are expected to maintain continuing knowledge of the Scheme subsequently; to ensure consistency in the assessment process there is an annual meeting of the assessors. The names of the current members of the assessment team are available in part 8 of the guidance notes, however candidates will not be informed to which individual assessors their portfolio has been submitted.

Each portfolio will be referred to three assessors for consideration. Assessors will not be asked to assess the portfolios of candidates who work for them or who they know well personally or for whom they have been a mentor. At least two of the assessors will have relevant experience in the same professional area/s as the candidate. The portfolio will be circulated between the assessors by post. The assessors will record their decisions on a standard assessment form which will be placed in a sealed envelope and returned to the Registrar.

3.5 Assessment criteria

The following section is taken from the assessor guidance.

Overall points

- The candidate should demonstrate an increased level of understanding of the relationship between theory and practice.
- The Scheme aims above all else to create **reflective practitioners** – that is to say, professionals who do not just do their work as it has always been done but think about it, and consider how and what they learned. For example – *could I do this differently/better? How? Where could I look for help/advice? Would I do this differently next time? If so, why – if not, why not? How could I put this into practice elsewhere?*

Criteria for each credit

The LOF should show the candidate:
- learning and developing skills in a variety of ways
- illustrating reflective practice
- putting theory into practice
- evaluating what they have done

The aim is to demonstrate fitness for purpose, not perfection

The LOFs and evidence should support a satisfactory level of professional competence by:-
- following national standards, or (if circumstances mean the candidate is unable to implement them) showing awareness of standards and explaining why they could not be followed
- no evidence of bad practice (e.g. unethical practice or failure to keep up to date)
- using up to date methods of work where possible
- adhering to the ARA Code of Conduct
- showing an awareness of professional concerns

Criteria for the portfolio overall

The portfolio should demonstrate that the candidate is-
- monitoring and maintaining their continuing professional development, by learning and developing their skills
- capable of working on their own initiative and making independent judgements
- able to manage their own work and professional development
- taking responsibility for their decisions
- able to develop in-depth responses to complicated problems and situations

In general, the portfolio should give you confidence that the candidate illustrates a professional approach and has professional knowledge - not just on one occasion but throughout the portfolio.

The following questions are on the assessment form which the assessors answer. For any negative decisions, the assessor must give reasons. If the assessor wishes, reasons and comments may be given for positive decisions, either as regards individual activities or on the portfolio as a whole.

Credits
For each activity for which credit/s is sought, has the candidate sufficiently proved that the activity meets the assessment criteria? If more than one credit is sought for any particular activity, do you agree that this is justified?

Reference
Does the reference provided by the candidate's mentor endorse the candidate's professional competence?

<u>Overall presentation</u>
Is the portfolio of professional standard in appearance and organisation?

<u>Assessor's recommendation</u>
Do you agree that this candidate should be admitted to the Archives & Records Association' Professional Register?

3.6 Registration confirmation and feedback

If all three assessors recommend the candidate should be accepted for registration, the Registrar will add the candidate's name to the Association's Register and notify the candidate, supplying their Registration Certificate and informing them of assessors' comments where appropriate. Successful candidates will have their names published in ARC and will be offered the opportunity to have their registration certificates presented at the Association's Conference. Portfolios will be returned to candidates, although the original application form, reference and assessors' forms will be retained and filed by the Registrar.

3.7 Resubmission and appeal

If one of the assessors fails the candidate, the application will be referred to a fourth assessor; if two assessors fail the candidate the application will not be referred to a fourth assessor. It may then be considered by the Registration sub-committee or a meeting of the Assessment Team to decide whether the application should be accepted or the candidate recommended to undertake further work on their portfolio and resubmit. The Registrar will notify any unsuccessful candidate and explain the reasons, giving as much detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement as possible. Candidates may resubmit after further work on their portfolio; the assessment fee covers one resubmission. A resubmitted portfolio will normally be seen by different assessors on subsequent submissions. Alternatively candidates can appeal to the Association's Education, Training & Development Committee; the appeal procedure is available on request from the Registrar.